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Unclassified Summary of Public Positions on INF

The initially favorable media reaction to the US summit proposal is turning critical in some instances, especially in the UK. Andropov's rejection of President Reagan's invitation dominated the headlines of a broad cross-section of papers. []

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UK

The Times yesterday editorialized that the US summit proposal was a propaganda move and a "strange way to launch a delicate diplomatic idea." The Guardian observed that "America's Allies are not impressed by the proposal," and surmised that some were concerned about specific linkage of the summit and the zero option. The pro-Tory Daily Telegraph more charitably noted that, although "clumsily framed," the proposal "could prove the start of a new phase in American-Soviet affairs." []

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West
Germany

Reaction to President Reagan's proposal, almost uniformly positive yesterday, has become more mixed in the West German press. The Stuttgarter Zeitung (independent) stated that "at long last, the US President has indicated that he wants to regain the initiative in East-West policies." The very conservative Die Welt announced that "Moscow's propaganda campaign...has been countered by the US President's statements to the Europeans." The Frankfurter Allgemeine (independent) noted that "Bush's Berlin address did not disappoint our expectations." The Sueddeutsche Zeitung (independent) reported that some CDU members have criticized the open letter, while The Frankfurter Rundschau (pro-SPD) observed that "compared to the pompous setting, the substance of the action staged by Reagan was meager." []

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France

The French press yesterday continued its generally positive reporting on both the Vice President's style and the Reagan letter. The centrist daily Nouveau Journal commented that the US summit invitation "will influence Western public opinion, which is increasingly sensitive to the pacifist campaign. After several weeks of hesitation and wavering...US leaders are counterattacking in the diplomatic field." The conservative Le Figaro has interpreted the Vice President's statements to mean that "balance or parity at the best possible level has become the immediate US objective." The rightist Le Quotidien observed that President "Reagan has made tremendous progress in foreign affairs. Under pressure from 'realists' in Washington who are overtaking the 'doctrinaires,' the President understood the need to change his tone and avoid appearing bellicose in the face of Andropov." []

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Belgium

Brussels yesterday released a statement strongly supporting President Reagan's proposal for a US-Soviet summit. The statement also noted that, even if negotiations led to "limited" deployment, the Allies would "be ready" to negotiate on "total abolition." []

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USSR

A TASS commentary of late Tuesday previewed the current INF round by noting that the preceding two rounds "did not produce any encouraging results." TASS predictably laid the blame for this on Washington, but added that "time will show what the American delegation has brought with it to Geneva this time." []

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Italy

In formal statements yesterday at a legislative meeting, Foreign Minister Colombo and Defense Minister Lagorio stressed Western unity and support for the zero option. Colombo acknowledged that the Fanfani government would "consider eventual alternative proposals." []

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